



**Catawba County
Economic Development Corporation**

October 23, 2006

Chairman Kevin Martin
Commissioner Deborah Taylor Tate
Commissioner Michael Copps
Commissioner Robert McDowell
Commissioner Jonathan Adelstein
Federal Communications Commission
The Portals
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: WC Docket No. 06-74

Dear FCC Commissioners:

I am writing to urge your approval of the AT&T-BellSouth merger. As President of the Catawba County Economic Development Corporation I have been carefully following the merger's progress and particularly the developments of the past few days. It is clear to me that this merger will serve the public interest and greatly benefit customers of the combined company.

The commitments that AT&T recently announced for much greater broadband affordability and availability are especially beneficial to Catawba County. Access to broadband is of great concern to businesses looking to Catawba County for location or expansion opportunities. Approval of the merger will address this critical need by offering truly *affordable* and *ubiquitous* service.

I understand that AT&T has proposed to the Commission a commitment to provide its dial access customers a free upgrade to DSL, including a free modem, for a limited time after the merger closing. I also understand the company has offered to reduce the price of residential broadband DSL to \$10 per month and to deliver broadband to *all* residential units in its combined territory, including lower-income and rural areas. These commitments will help drive high-speed broadband usage and help close the digital divide between rich and poor, urban and rural.

I urge the Commission to approve the merger of AT&T and BellSouth promptly so that consumers can benefit as soon as possible from the broadband provisions this merger offers.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



**Catawba County
Economic Development Corporation**

President, Catawba County EDC

cc: Marlene Dortch, Commission Secretary